

currently provides trained personnel to identify and report changes in his condition. It is this provision of personal care that enables him to stay at home rather than being forced out of the home that he has lived in for 45 years and into a nursing home.

Tomorrow he will no longer be able to receive personal care at home because venipuncture will no longer be a qualifying skill.

Unfortunately, home health agencies across Tennessee and the rest of the Nation are familiar with cases just like this one. Their diseases may be different, but their circumstances are alike.

As a result, I am an original cosponsor of H.R. 2912, the Medicare Venipuncture Fairness Act of 1998, sponsored by the gentleman from West Virginia (Mr. RAHALL). This legislation would secure continued home health services to these beneficiaries. In addition, it would require a study by the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services to document any abuses in the venipuncture benefit and recommend to Congress the appropriate use of venipuncture under the Medicare home health benefit.

Some health care policymakers are concerned that venipuncture coverage has led to abuse of the home health care service. While I remain concerned about the millions of dollars that are being inappropriately spent because of the fraudulent and abusive billing practices of some home health care providers, I feel strongly that the patients are not the ones to be penalized. Individuals and institutions who knowingly defraud the government by submitting improper Medicare claims should be punished. However, it is inexcusable to penalize sick, disabled, elderly people who are innocent victims. I will continue to fight to see that this matter is addressed appropriately while allowing much needed home health services to continue for those who have an undisputed need for this care.

Mr. Speaker, I hope very strongly that the Health Care Financing Administration will revisit this issue. I think they are wrong. In the best interest of America and these people that need this service so badly, that they revisit it and extend the time and let these people get the care that they badly need at home.

#### FURTHER TRIBUTE TO THE HONORABLE RONALD V. DELLUMS

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Under a previous order of the House, the gentleman from California (Ms. MILLENDER-McDONALD) is recognized for 5 minutes.

Ms. MILLENDER-McDONALD. Mr. Speaker, I come to this floor today to pay homage to a great man, a great Californian and a great American, my colleague, my friend, the Honorable RONALD V. DELLUMS.

The gentleman from California (Mr. DELLUMS) has served 31 years in public

life, the last 27 in the U.S. House of Representatives, with distinction and honor. When he came to this House 37 years ago in 1971, he wore bell bottom pants and an afro perhaps larger in scale than the dome of this Capitol. Not surprisingly, he was immediately labeled as an untrustworthy radical and militant, the victim of stereotypes to which African Americans have long been accustomed. But he was here to represent his East San Francisco Bay area constituents, whose commitment to a full employment economy, equality, civil rights, quality education and peace with justice has been and remained steadfast throughout his career.

What those who stereotyped him failed to recognize was that they would be dealing with a distinguished, principled, educated man who diligently and strategically worked to understand the rules and customs of this House and to learn how to work within the construct of this House. Through his work and example, we who are new Members learned many lessons from RON DELLUMS. Policy development and lawmaking is a marathon, not a sprint. To be successful, we must be prepared to meet those who hold different points of view than our own and meet them on their own terms, carefully listening to their arguments, and struggle to find common ground and mutuality of interest.

In offering this advice, he never told us what we should do, but instead suggested what he would do. He taught us to plan and prepare, to thoroughly understand the nuts and bolts of an issue. And finally, he said, never forget the people who sent you here, the constituents who invested in us the power to represent them. They are the reason we are here.

Congressman RON DELLUMS is revered on both sides of this aisle because of his integrity and his commitment to progressive ideas. He was always on the cutting edge of the issues. California will miss him in the ninth district, but the State has been enriched by RON DELLUMS. While he towers above most of us physically, this attribute is matched by his intellect, faith in the process and optimism for peaceful resolution of conflict.

Mr. Speaker, I came to Congress during the midterm of the 104th Congress, having won a special election. My path to Congress did not provide me the opportunity to bond with the Members of my class during the heady days which normally follow a general election victory. I did not have orientation for Members-elect, as is the practice of getting acquainted with your colleagues before sitting for a new Congress. Nevertheless, RON DELLUMS' gentle smile, kind words and unreserved support, willingness to listen without prejudice and accessibility qualities have contributed to my development as a Member and my ability to better represent the constituents of my California's 37th Congressional District.

Congressman RON DELLUMS' intellect, keen grasp of the issues, knowledgeable of the process and impeccable style are attributes to the people of California's Bay area, the United States House of Representatives and the Nation which will mostly miss him. And while we will miss him, we all recognize that life goes on, and the only constant in life is change.

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RON DELLUMS' contributions to this House, indeed his greatest legacy, will be that he used his service in Congress as an instrument for change in the pursuit of jobs, peace and justice.

I wish him the very best as he pursues his future endeavors and wish to convey my thanks as a colleague, a friend, and an American to his family for their sacrifice and generosity in sharing this unique man with us. And I thank my brother, the honorable RONALD V. DELLUMS, for his friendship and his unreserved brotherly support on my behalf.

#### TRIBUTE TO THE HONORABLE RONALD V. DELLUMS

The SPEAKER pro tempore (Mr. LUCAS). Under a previous order of the House, the gentleman from North Carolina (Mr. WATT) is recognized for 5 minutes.

Mr. WATT of North Carolina. Mr. Speaker, I have neither the eloquence or the thoughtfulness to find the right words to express my feelings for my colleague, RON DELLUMS, who is leaving this House this week. How does one say "thank you" to someone who has had their phones tapped, who has been subjected to experiences in committee, on the floor, that we could not now imagine as Members of Congress?

About 15 years ago, when I was not involved in Federal politics at all, to the extent I had any involvement in politics it was at the local or State level, most of my time was being spent making a living learning how to practice law, someone invited me to attend in Washington a Congressional Black Caucus weekend. It was at that weekend that RON DELLUMS was the keynote speaker. He spoke for about 45, 50 minutes, and the entire audience never uttered a peep. It was at that point that I started to admire and respect RON DELLUMS.

Fast forward to 1992 and imagine how it felt to me to be elected to Congress and to have the honor and privilege of serving with this powerful man; to have him come to me and say, I have heard you speak on the floor and I like your passion, when I had admired his passion for so many years; to receive from him constructive suggestions about how to be an effective Member of Congress; to receive from him constructive suggestions about how to express myself on the floor, when I had heard him be one of the few people who could rise on the floor of Congress and actually change opinions of his colleagues during the course of a debate.